S
N A group of patrilineally
563 related families forms the basic economic (i.e., migrational)
621 unit in Mongol society. Pastures are distributed among such
S units. The structure of the society itself dictates a certain
N collectivistic working concept. Mongol social groupings are
[622] led by tribal chieftains, who are directly responsible to the
563 district Chinese official. Mongol society, unlike other North-
127 western societies, has not undergone great changes under
668 Communist influences. Their basic pattern of life has remained
S the same as it was under the Manchu and Republican regimes.
563 The Oirats (or Western Mongols:
233 The Oirats of the Northwest are primarily pastoral nomads.
[434] Their chief source of income is cattle, horses, sheep and
[731] goats. Because they live in a desert-steppe area they move
S around in larger or smaller groups depending upon the avail-
563 able resources.
621 The designation for these small economic and migrational
[594] units or camps is "xotn" which includes a group of nuclear
[613] families patrilineally related - tracing descent from a common
[597] ancestor in the third, fourth, or fifth generation.
Membership in this group can be gained by adoption, by attachment of a daughter's husband in the case of a man with no sons and of poor unrelated families or poor related families on the paternal side. Although some poorer families remained apart from these "xotn" it usually is more worthwhile to add their few cattle, etc., to that of the larger group and render services in return for the benefits gained
S thereby.
[613] Among the Oirats the closer an individual's relationship
[554] to the ancestor, the greater prestige and status he enjoys in this group.
S
563 The headman or elder ("axalaci") dwells in a tent situated in
361 the front of the encampment facing south. The remainder of
[622] the group is arranged according to the age of the male members
S in a circle behind the dwelling of the elder. The dependent
[613] families are situated in the rear of the circle but still according
[554] to the closeness of their relation to the ancestor.
563 Wives of members of these extended families are also
621 affected by the social set-up; their position and status varies
593 directly with that of their husbands, although a wife's position
562 as far as respect patterns go was never equal to her husband's. A wife observes strict respect for her husband's kinsmen who possess, by reason of age and relationship, a higher position than that of her husband. Very often she will not even pronounce the names of any of these elder gentlemen out of respect for them. The status of the wife grows with that of her husband during his lifetime. When he dies, she can either remain living with his kinsmen, in which case she holds the same position socially that he had during his lifetime, or she can

563 /Oirats/
621 return to her father's family, in which case she forfeits all
593 rights which were hers as a member of her husband's family.
562 The oldest male of the oldest family holds the position of
563 "axalaci" which carries with it the right of final authority
622 in the group. Upon the death of the "axalaci" authority over the "xotn" is invested in his wife who in turn passes the care of the herds on to her oldest son or a younger brother of her husband.

[422] Herds are the common property of the "xotn" but are
[233] managed by the "axalaci." However, the cattle belonging to dependent related or non-related families are managed by the owners and is not the common property of the "xotn."

563 If any of the sons of the "axalaci" desires to move away
622 from the family and establish himself independently, he can
59[illegible] rightfully claim a percentage of the common herd. If the
233 particular times happen to be especially prosperous so that cattle are in such abundance that pasturage in one area is lacking to supply them all, the son might be encouraged to leave, the pressure for his departure increasing if there were ample manpower to get along without him.

563 When the "axalaci" dies the herds are distributed evenly
622 among his children, with the exception of the eldest son,
233 who receives a larger percentage than his younger brothers.
428 A certain percentage also passes into the ownership of the clergy.

563 The "xotn" or encampment is a political as well as an
621 economic unit. It is termed a "fifteen" (does this mean that each "xotn" was broken into units of fifteen yurts, or is it simply a convenient term synonomous with "xotn"? The reference is vague on this point.)

563 If a crime is committed by a member of a particular
628 "fifteen" against an individual or group outside of his own "fifteen" the entire unit will be penalized for this infraction
[626] of the law. Thus, a strong element of social control was made operative.

563 The "xotn" is also a very convenient unit for purposes
621 of taxation, and as a resource of cattle and other animals
[65[illegible] it was the income for the nobility and the lamaseries. In addition the encampment is an exogamic unit.
[582] The use of pasturage among the various "xotan" is based
563 primarily on tradition. Each has several hundred acres of
628 land from which they choose a part each summer and each
233 winter. If by chance one group needs the pasturage of another,
423 the former will ask permission, and this will normally be granted. Special arrangements have always to be made, however; no group can simply move in on another's pasturage.

563 The axalaci of several "fifteens" in addition to chosen
622
628

THE FAMILY

S N 121 59 563 I. Introduction

Northwest China is heavily populated by national minorities. In the province of Sinkiang, the Chinese even form a minority group and the Turkic Moslems constitute the majority. Therefore, in a discussion of the family in this area, general statements applying to the population as a whole would not apply, but a distinction has to be made between several different ethnic elements.

For the purposes of the present section, the following rough division suggests itself: (a) Turkic sedentary Moslems; (b) Turkic nomadic Moslems; (c) the Dungans or Chinese Moslems; (d) the Tibetans; (e) the Mongours; (f) the Mongols, and (g) the Chinese. The last two groups are discussed in detail in their respective handbooks, the IMAR Handbook and the General Handbook of China.

S N 779 59 183 581 Among all Moslems Islam forms the ideal concept of the family. In Islamic society the institution of the family has always been one of primary importance. The family is considered the basic essential of human civilization. Having a family, and being a dutiful member of one, is not only regarded as necessary, but is expressly a religious obligation. Marriage, the step leading to the establishment of a family, is a sacred contract into which each Moslem must enter. A Moslem who, without just reason, does not marry and does [589] not establish a family, is considered almost as a heretic.

S N 59 182 [554] [589] The family's function is primarily for reproduction of the group and the continuation of the family. The institution of the family, furthermore, provides security and peace of mind for its members. The family man is respected and esteemed in Moslem society; he is considered honorable and trustworthy. An unmarried man is likely to be looked upon with some suspicion and distrust.

S N 59 779 183 Since the family plays such a significant role in Moslem society, there is great emphasis on its unity and closeness. This is probably best expressed in the following quotation from the Koran, "...and Allah has made wives for you from yourselves and has given you sons and daughters from your wives." This closeness resulting from the blood relationship is extended to all other phases of family life.

S N ● 593 S N [829] Love and compassion should underlie all the relationships within the family. In relations between a man and his wife, or wives, between one kin to another, love is stressed as the basis. A man's behavior within his family reflects his attitude toward society as a whole. If there is love in his heart for his family, he will also have compassion for others and be of service to society.

S N 592 593 In the family, the man's position is always superior to that of the woman, regardless of his age. The wife is, accordingly, put in an inferior position to that of her husband, being under his control completely. The head of the house holds unquestioned authority

S N 592 593 over the members of the household. Full obedience and respect is expected from the children, who are obliged to take care of their parents when the latter reach old age.

S N 595 709 Islam allows a man to have more than one wife. The truly religious person will not exceed four wives.

S N 779 829 Islam grew in a tribal society and retained many of the loyalty concepts relating to the tribes. After his own family, a man owes loyalty to his tribe. This attitude is strongly reflected in the religious writings. As Islam spread, these concepts were carried to societies, other than those residing in the Arabian Peninsula.

II. The Sedentary Moslems of Sinkiang

A. Family Organization

S 121 592 In this discussion the concept of family refers to a unit consisting of members related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and having a common budget and common property. Persons remaining in the family and those temporarily absent are included. Servants or relatives temporarily visiting with the family are considered members of the household, but not members of the family unit.

S 592 563 Among the Turkic Moslems of Sinkiang the family consists of a man, his wife or wives, and their unmarried children. In some cases it may also include their divorced or widowed daughters. Occasionally the married sons stay with their family for a short period. Each family unit occupies its own separate house. One may have a few households to take care of, in the case that one has more than one wife. Polygamy is permitted according to Islamic law. However, the majority of the men and particularly the peasants, cannot afford to keep more than one wife at a time. Wealthier people and well-to-do travelling merchants often have more than one household. Each wife is usually kept in a different section of town, or in different towns altogether (this is the case when the husbands are merchants and officials who travel to a great extent). The familiar harem of other Moslem countries hardly exists as such in Sinkiang. The individualism of the women, the freedom allowed to them and their jealous nature and temperament make it impossible for a man to keep more than one wife under the same roof. This factor complicates the nature of the nuclear structure of the family, and sometimes results in one man's having similar obligations to more than one household.

S 595 563 S [562] [152] Families usually are large, regardless of their wealth or poverty. It is considered a disgrace for a woman not to have many children. This is one reason why a man often prefers to marry a divorced woman with child (a son preferably), who has already proved her ability to bear children.

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563 592 562 [565] The focus of the family is on the sons, who above all provide the continuity of the family, and also aid the family economically before they establish their own households. Among the lower classes, daughters also often are very desirable. There is always a chance that a daughter, particularly if she is good-looking, will bring a wealthy husband to the family. The family expects nothing [582] of their son after the age of 15 or 16 when he marries and sets up a household for himself.

563 592 593 182 A statement can be made, applying particularly to the sedentary Turkic Moslems in Sinkiang, that the relationships within the family are not as fixed and close as they are in China proper. This is due mainly to the factor that the institution of the family as a whole is loosely bound and unstable. Membership in the family nucleus changes often with the frequent conclusions and dissolutions of marriages. A great degree of permanency exists among the agricultural population, but most of the city-dwellers are subject to constant permutations.

563 593 178 The Islamic relationships between husband and wife are the basic patterns existing in Sinkiang, but they have been modified by local customs, and are less rigid and extreme in severity.

573 562 563 The husband-wife relationships are not based on equality, legal or otherwise. The differences in the family positions of the husband and wife are mainly a manifestation of the general attitudes toward men and women in Islamic society. A woman is considered a weak and irresponsible being, who is subject to impulses and whose behavior is largely irrational. Man, being the superior of the two, is given the authority and place of importance within the [671] family. Islamic law, which established the man as leader and [779] head of the family, obliges him not to misuse his power and to be generous to those who depend on him. In practice, the prerogatives accompanying the husband's superior position are often abused for his own advantage.

In Sinkiang the women's position is not as low as in other Moslem centers. The wife enjoys some rights which give her a certain degree of independence and freedom. Under certain circumstances, which will be discussed later, she can obtain a divorce on her own initiative, and she has some property rights. According to Islamic law her foremost obligation is to respect and honor her husband. Obedience to the husband is stressed in theory but is not as fully practiced. Women here participate in economic life to a greater degree than in most Moslem countries, and have some rights themselves. Consequently, they also enjoy a better social status. The Moslem women of Sinkiang appear with their husbands in the presence of male visitors, while in other Moslem countries they are forbidden to appear in the presence even of their husband's father or his elder brother. In Sinkiang a woman frequently leaves the house unaccompanied, without asking the

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593 permission of her husband. This is unheard of among orthodox
562 Moslems. These few incidents are indicative of the general
563 attitude in Sinkiang to women and the place they occupy in society and in their families.

563 The father-son relationship is very important, particularly
593 when the son has not yet established a home for himself and is living at his father's house. The father initiates his son in a trade
[868] and provides a wife for him. In most cases the father provides
[584] his son with a strip of land or some property after he is married
[425] to start him in life. After his father's death, the son inherits his
[428] property, and his prestige and social status (if he has any). How-
[171] ever, the relationships of father-son is not as seriously regarded as it is in China, where it carries such an immense value. The son does not always stay with his father. In some cases of divorce,
[586] it may be agreed that the mother will take care of the son, in which even the son is subject to his mother's influence. Otherwise, the mother-son relationship is not as important as that of the father-son. The mother's influence on her son's life is not as significant as it is on the daughter.

The father-daughter relationship is much looser. The father has much less contact with his daughter than with his son. He is mainly interested in marrying her off and making some profit out of the marriage deal. If he is an orthodox Moslem he may hardly
[582] see her at all, the custom being that men eat separately. The daughter leaves home at a very early age (twelve to fourteen)to get married, and if she is not divorced, her father is likely to see her very few times after she has left home.

The mother-daughter relationship is closer and warmer. Both stay home, and the mother's duty is to teach her daughter household duties and social manners. Mother and daughter are likely to maintain a fairly close relationship even after the daughter's
[586] marriage. In general, in cases of divorce, the father will keep the sons and the mother will keep the daughters, and the small children who are nursing. Exceptions do occur where the mother keeps all the children, or the father agrees to take care of a daughter. The arrangements depend on the agreement reached between the parents, and on their economic conditions.

Primarily as a result of the unstable family conditions, the relationship between brothers is the loosest of the family ties. In many cases brothers may not be full brothers, but may have a different mother or a different father. In the lower classes, brothers often go to seek fortune in a different town or a different section of town, and lose complete contact with each other. Fortune, wealth, and social status may also put gaps between brothers. They generally do not know each other very well and lose complete contact after their own marriages. Brother-sister relationships hardly ever attain a close association. The girls leave home at an

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563 593 early age, and during their stay at home they are occupied in different phases of the household.

563 592 565 184 The families of the lower classes often comprise economic units, particularly among the farmers, artisans, and small merchants. The family as a whole is engaged in the economic tasks of gaining a livelihood. The father trains his sons to assist him in his profession, and eventually to take over and inherit their father's place. The father thus need not hire any assistants, but gets the necessary aid from his own family. Usually one son stays with his father, while the others, when they are old enough to establish their own households, go and seek their fortunes elsewhere. But while belonging to the nuclear family, all the sons participate in the economic activities.

The well-to-do families do not, as a rule, comprise such units of production. Some of the sons may be studying and training for future positions as officials, while others may actively participate in their father's business.

563 592 565 184 86 [801] Most families in the lower brackets, i.e., the majority, cannot afford to send their sons to schools; they cannot afford the fees, nor spare the time in which their sons might be participating in the economic activities. Thus the family takes upon itself the additional tasks of educating the children and teaching them the religious customs and rituals, and social manners. The child learns how to perform the most basic rituals of the Moslem religion, to recite a few prayers in Arabic, and to behave according to the local social customs and standards.

563 602 Larger kin groupings are hardly existent among the Turkic sedentary population of the Northwest. Since the family unit's ties are so loose, it is impossible to maintain relationships with relatives who do not belong to the immediate family. No ties of everyday life keep them together, and no economic obligations are required from relatives, other than the most immediate ones. In the well-to-do families, there might be some additional ties involving property and inheritance, but otherwise there is little closeness in the relationships of the members of the clan.

563 593 684 [593] [586] [589] The immediate family is the only social unit to which the individuals feel loyal and attached. However, under the circumstances, these attachments are not too strong. This may constitute one of the main reasons that adultery and lack of loyalty to a spouse are not as severely regarded as they are by the orthodox Moslems. With the loose laws of marriage and divorce in Sinkiang, many incidents of possible adultery are prevented because the husband and wife are able to attain a legal separation and remarry. Where cases of adultery do occur, the women are the main subjects for punishment. The husband of an adulteress is entitled to punish his wife and to cease to treat her kindly. There is not much that a woman can do to a man if he has switched his loyalty.

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563 whether he is [illegible]g to take all the children, only the boys, or none
586 at all. If the wife has to take care of the sons, the husband is required to pay toward their maintenance.

563 The weakness of their position and the looseness of the marriage
369 tie undoubtedly bear hard on the women in towns, who have no sec ir-
586 ity in their home life. They are subject to divorce at any time, and then may be left with no proper alimony to take care of their needs. The men are given great freedom to act according to whim. Cases are frequent where husbands have legally deserted wives, leaving them with one or more children to look after and insufficient or no maintenance. Conditions are better in the country; but even in towns the position of women is somewhat better than in most other Moslem societies.

III. Nomadic Moslems of Sinkiang

121 A. Family Organization

59 Among the nomadic Turkic Moslems of the Northwest the pat-
182 tern of family organization is somewhat similar to that of the
563 sedentary Turks, with two major distinctions; (a) there is an ele-
184 ment of stability in the family institution of the nomads, in spite of the existent facility for dissolving marriages and contracting new ones, and (b) the influence of Islam is not nearly as strong as it is among the sedentary peoples. These differences are manifested in all aspects of family life, including its nuclear structure. The family unit consists of a man, his wife, and their unmarried
563 children. Cases of divorce and temporary separations are much
586 more rare than among the sedentary Moslems, and consequently
184 the divorcee or separated daughter that often belongs to the sedentary family is absent in the nomadic family. Each family occupies
563 its own tent. The tents of the married sons generally are close
592 to their parents' tent, and close contact between the various house-
342 holds is maintained.

563 In size, nomadic families equal those of the sedentary popu-
592 lation. Many children, especially sons, are considered a mani-
[162] festation of God's blessings. Due to the way of life and dependency
[184] on economic cooperation the relationships within the family are maintained on a much closer basis. The wife shares much more actively in the economic burden. She takes care of the house, milks the animals, utilizes their products in many different ways (milk products, hides, wool, etc.). The husband's life is less burdened by economic tasks: taking care of the cattle, guarding them, setting the camps, selling, bargaining and hunting. The
[593] relationship between husband and wife is not as greatly influenced by the edicts of Islam. The women are less subject to the complete authority and mercy of their husbands, and to limited social contacts.

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563 593 [369] [434] [868] Children and parents relationships differ also. They are characterized by a much greater economic interdependence. The children of the city-dwellers have a certain degree of economic independence, and have a small income of their own at an early age, but no opportunity of the sort presents itself to the nomadic children. The sons help their fathers and learn from them how to manage the livestock, how to shoot and hunt, how to bargain and sell, etc... they remain attached to their families even after marriage, having no separate property of their own.

[868] The daughters have much to learn from their mothers, in preparation for the many responsibilities that they will have in the future, and their help around the house is extremely valuable and necessary. A daughter, however, does not retain her relationship with her family after she is married, but shifts her allegiance to her husband's family.

563 592 In the nomadic society, families constitute definite units of production. This is the basis for their unity and close cooperation. It is almost impossible for a couple to get along without the help of their children and it is rare that their children would be able to become economically independent. Moreover, the family framework provides for the educational, religious, and social needs for the individuals comprising it.

563 184 562 583 [586] B. Marriage and Divorce Customs

Among the Turkis of the plains, for example at Kashgar, women are at a discount, wives are cheap and divorces even cheaper. Among the mountain people (particularly among the Kirghiz) however, girls are at a premium and the would-be-bridegroom or his father has to pay a heavy brideprice, which usually amounts to ten to thirty yaks or their equivalent in other kinds of livestock. When

563 584 a boy has reached the age of six or seven and therefore may be expected to survive until manhood, his parents ordinarily betroth him to a neighbor's daughter of similar age. This betrothal is known as the qalam. The female relatives of both parties play a

[583] leading part in the lengthy haggling about the brideprice which precedes it.

563 585 When all yaks have been paid, and the young people have reached the age of fourteen and sixteen years respectively, the bride's people invite all the neighbors to a feast at which the marriage is announced. The bride and bridegroom remain in their tents in the background and do not attend. The feast and announcement, known as the nikah, constitute the wedding, there being no other ceremony. However, the bridegroom cannot yet take his bride to his own home. She continues to live with her parents for a period of two to five months, during which the latter make and furnish an aq-oi (tent with its felts, rugs, wall hangings, screens, pots, pans, milk bowls, and other necessary items. The bridegroom continues